

*United States v. Ari Elias Baum*

**14-CR-164-WMS-JJM**

# DEFENDANT'S EXHIBIT A

*R. BRUCE BAUM, Ed.D.*  
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Honorable William M. Skretny  
United States District Judge  
c/o Brian P. Comerford  
Assistant Federal Public Defender  
300 Pearl Street, Suite 200  
Buffalo, New York 14202

Dear Judge Skretny

I am Ari's father. There was a *Buffalo News* article recently that referred to me as his Step Father. This is not true. I was present at Children's Hospital at the time of his birth. Although not his biological father, I am his legal father and I raised him. I retired about seven years ago from Buffalo State College where I was a professor in the Exceptional Education Department for 38 years.

Ari has made contributions to the betterment of the Buffalo Community. While a senior in high school he participated as a part of his schooling as a volunteer at Roswell Park Cancer Institute and assisted the Buffalo Police Department in implementing what was then the "DARE" program at several Buffalo Schools.

Ari was raised in the Jewish faith and had a Bar Mitzvah but as a young adult he decided to convert to Islam. I believe that this decision has helped him in that he tries his best to adhere to the positive principles of the religion. He has traveled to several Moslem countries but NEVER has been involved in any activities that were counter to the principles of the religion or any activities that would not be in the best interests of the United States. I have frequently asked him why it seems it is people who are Moslem who perpetrate random acts of violence against others. He replies that they can't really be true Moslems if they commit such acts.

As a child he received positive principles of living from his mother, who holds a Master's in Social Work and practiced as a social worker during his upbringing, and myself. For instance, on more than one occasion he found items of value in our Allentown neighborhood. We would be sure that he did everything possible to find the proper owners which was done with success on more than one occasion.

He was fortunate to be accepted into the Bennett Park Montessori School in Buffalo at an early age. This public school, that actively promoted peace and cooperation, exposed him to a diverse group of students and he was able to form friendships, some of which still exist today. As a child he participated in the Delaware Park Soccer Program which also taught him principles of cooperation. As a teenager he

participated, through the Davinci High School Program, in the West Side Rowing Club that also taught the benefits of individual and group effort. Also, during high school, he worked for about a year at a deli near the corner of Elmwood and North Streets. The owner was well known as a "difficult" character in that he insisted on no cell phones by patrons and had other unusual "quirks." The fact that Ari could successfully work in such an environment for over a year is a tribute to his flexibility and self-esteem.

Ari is a generous person and will go out of his way to help friends and family. I see him and communicate with him regularly and he always asks if there is anything he can do for me. He has been under federal parole supervision for several years and, to my knowledge, has checked with his parole officer as directed, participated in mental health counseling and not violated the parole.

Ari is basically a decent person who intends no harm and is trying his best to live a fulfilling and peaceful life. I am hopeful, as you consider his sentencing, that you keep these facts in mind.

Thank you for allowing me to share these remarks.

R. Bruce Baum  
Father

*United States v. Ari Elias Baum*

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# DEFENDANT'S EXHIBIT B

1240 Delaware Avenue #412  
Buffalo, New York 14209  
October 29, 2017

Re: Ari Elias Baum

Honorable William M. Skretny  
United States District Judge  
c/o Brian P. Comerford  
Assistant Federal Public Defender  
300 Pearl Street, Suite 200  
Buffalo, New York 14202

Dear Honorable William M. Skretny:

I am writing to you on behalf of Ari Baum who will come before you on November 15, 2017 for sentencing after a three and one half year legal process. I am Ari's mother. I am also a clinical social worker with over forty years experience working in the field. Fifteen years of my work was interfacing with Family Court as the District Supervisor of Berkshire Farm Center and Services for Youth, a child care agency.

Ari was first taken to a child psychologist by his father and me at the age of four. His first psychiatric hospitalization was at the age of eight when we took him on the advice of his psychologist to the Menniger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas. While at the age of eight they were able to identify most of his psychiatric issues, a diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder would not come for a few years.

Ari and we struggled throughout his childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood. Despite this he was never in trouble with the law nor was he ever even suspended from school. He was born and raised Jewish and became a Bar Mitzvah at the age of thirteen.

Ari continued to struggle as an adult. Still in his early twenties he converted to Islam. While this was not something that I had ever envisioned nor wanted I slowly began to see the effects of his beliefs and prayer on Ari. He became able to empathize with others, especially children. He volunteered to teach Sunday School. He became more loving and helpful. He developed an unshakeable moral code which includes not stealing nor committing fraud. The structure of his beliefs helped him learn to control facets of himself that had been out of control due to his mental illness. While basically living in poverty Ari regularly spends what little money he has to buy me flowers just to make me happy and to honor me as his mother. He has atoned for hurtful deeds committed primarily when manic. Basically Ari has become a better man. He is now engaged to be married.

Ari now knows that what he did was wrong. I still believe that his intent was not to commit fraud but rather he believed that when he returned to the United States the money from Social Security that he had spent would gradually be taken out of his future checks as it had been done before. This was denial and arrogance on his part. I offer this not as an excuse but rather an explanation. These are hallmark symptoms of bipolar disorder.

For three and one half years he has been under the Court's supervision and he has not

been violated once. He has been unable to leave Erie County. He never drinks alcohol nor uses drugs. He has, as you know, been investigated for years by the F.B.I. for possible links to terrorism to no avail. Despite the lack of any misdeeds regarding this he and his family have suffered through three articles in the Buffalo News about these unfounded suspicions.

Having now been convicted a felon Ari's life is severely affected. I won't delineate these ways as Your Honor is well aware of the restrictions placed on a convicted felon. He suffers at having been convicted of a crime which is an abhorrence to him. He would rather give someone the shirt off of his back than steal. It is the antithesis of who he is and what he believes.

With regard to his sentencing I am begging Your Honor for leniency and mercy. Ari is already suffering for what he did. He poses no risk to the community. The lessons to be learned through incarceration have already been learned. On a very personal level I plead for mercy for myself. Ari's sister, who also is diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder, hung herself when in jail for an accumulation of traffic violations. She was found not breathing but with a thready pulse. She spent eight days in intensive care and has lasting memory issues. She believes that with his mental health issues Ari is less able than she was to psychologically handle prison. I will live in fear throughout any incarceration of Ari.

Thank you for your kind and learned consideration of this matter. We remain at Your Honor's mercy.

Sincerely,

*Wendy Baum*